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INFO RUEHXS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE
RHHMUNA/USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/EX AND EAP/MTS
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SUBJECT: U.S. AGENCIES DELIVER CRITICAL HELP

REF: A) MANILA 1504 B) Manila 1521

¶1. Summary: U.S. recovery and relief efforts have had a huge impact in the aftermath of Typhoon Frank, which ravaged the Philippines June 21-22. The rising death toll from the typhoon itself is at least 629 and more than 287 missing. Only 57 people have survived from the capsized ferry Princess of the Stars and two American Citizens are among those presumed dead. Possibilities of recovering more survivors among 800 plus passengers and crew on board are slim, so total casualties from the typhoon are expected to exceed 1,200. Assistance from the U.S. military and post has been crucial to the recovery efforts of the Philippine Government. End Summary

¶2. USS RONALD REAGAN and its carrier group, the USNS STOCKHAM, helicopters, Navy P-3 maritime surveillance aircraft, eight Mission personnel, and two USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance personnel are in the area and have been working closely with Philippine military and government personnel and non-governmental organizations to conduct search operations, deliver relief goods and services, and inform the media of results.

¶3. On June 21, Typhoon Frank affected half a million people in 48 provinces. Eight provinces have been declared under a state of calamity, making them eligible for Philippine government funds. In addition to the deaths from the Princess of the Stars, ten other vessels and boats sank and there were deaths caused by flash floods, falling debris, and electrocution. According to the National Disaster Coordination Council, the typhoon caused \$33 million of infrastructure damage, \$11 million of damage to schools and other public buildings, and \$108 million in agricultural damage. Additionally, 178,467 homes sustained damage.

¶4. One American family (two citizens and three legal permanent residents) boarded the ferry and are presumed dead. American Citizen Services has combed the ferry's 800-person manifest, and has identified seven other passengers who might be U.S. citizens, but there is no confirmation these individuals boarded the ferry. Of over 80 welfare and whereabouts queries, all but 15 have been resolved.

¶5. The U.S. Navy vessel USNS STOCKHAM, with two search-and-rescue capable helicopters, small boats, and an underwater scuba team, was deployed June 24 to find survivors and locate bodies from the Princess of the Stars. Two P-3 maritime surveillance aircraft have provided imagery of the Panay Island and the area surrounding Sibuyan Island, where the ferry sank. U.S. troop scuba operations ceased June 26 as prospects for finding survivors decreased.

¶6. USS RONALD REAGAN arrived west of Panay Island on June 25. Helicopters from the REAGAN have delivered 28,000 bottles of water and 10,000 lbs. of rice and bottled water from the carrier group's stores to otherwise inaccessible areas and are conducting damage assessments and watershed surveys. They are now transporting Philippine relief supplies to affected persons, as well. Three hospitals on Panay were without power: Reagan engineers fixed one

hospital generator and may purchase generators to cover other needs. Reagan's medical service officer went ashore June 27 to conduct an initial assessment in areas that have not been accessible by ground.

¶7. Two Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) staff joined USAID and embassy staff on the ground in Iloilo on June 26 and will stay through July 5. OFDA placed an additional person at PACOM to coordinate assistance. OFDA has scheduled a relief flight, estimated to land on June 29 in Iloilo, with \$650,000 of goods for the Philippine Red Cross, augmenting the \$100,000 cash donation already provided.

¶8. A Joint Information Coordination Center has been established by the Embassy Public Affairs Section, the Reagan's Public Affairs Officer, and the Philippine Government. They continue to compile, clear and release images and information to the local media.

¶9. Ambassador will be visiting Panay on June 29 to observe relief operations and meet with U.S. and Philippine officials involved.

KENNEY